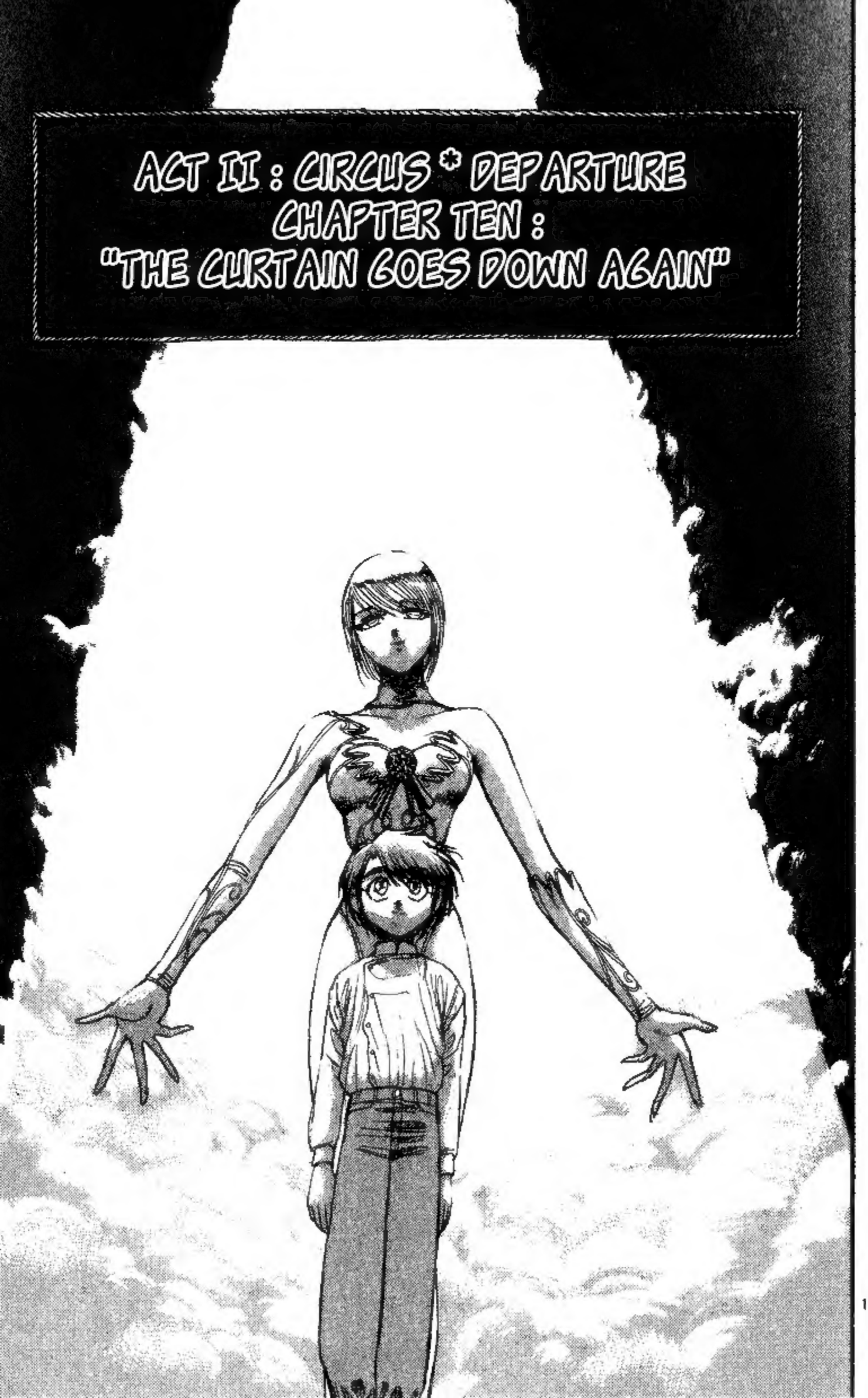
ACT II : CIRCUS * DEPARTURE
CHAPTER TEN :
"THE CURTAIN GOES DOWN AGAIN"



SCLAC!!

IT'S ONE OF MY BROTHER'S CHILDREN! MY BROTHER, SADAYOSHI, THE FORMER CEO OF THE SAIGA GROUP!

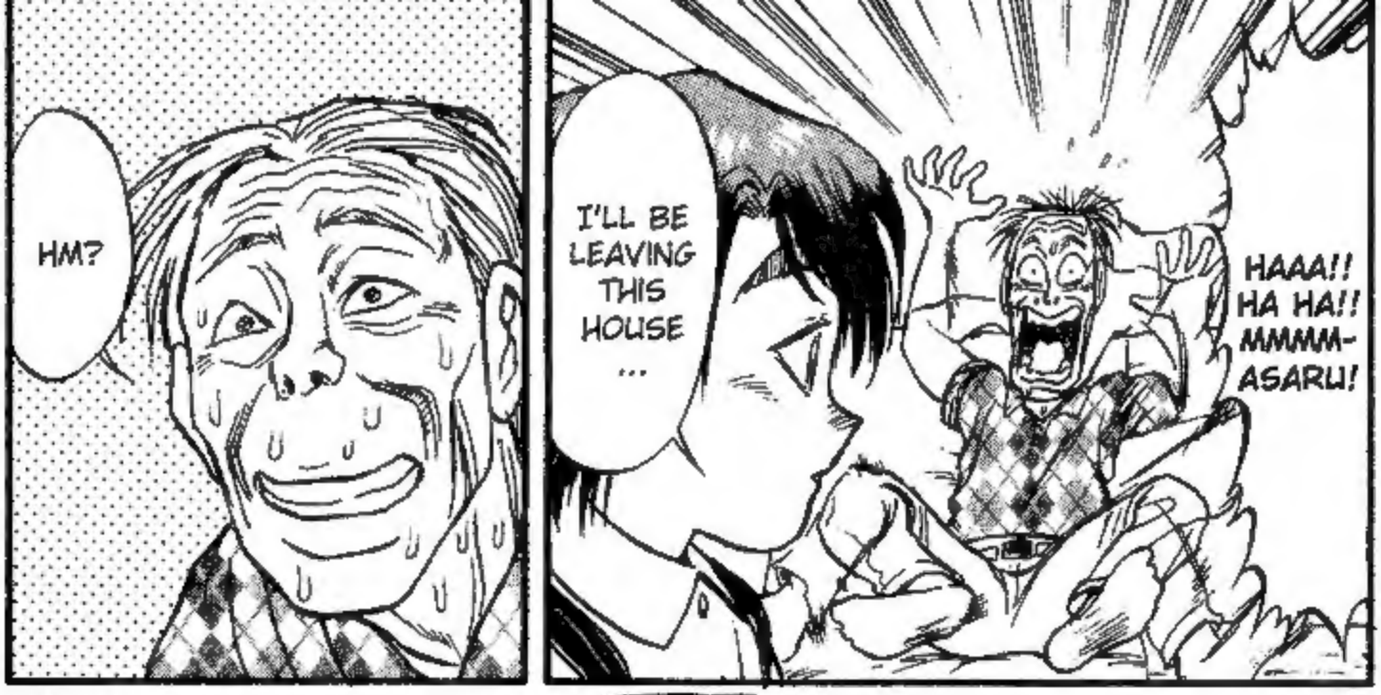
BUT... I KNOW WHO JUST CALLED!
AGAIN, NO ONE ON THE LINE...

2

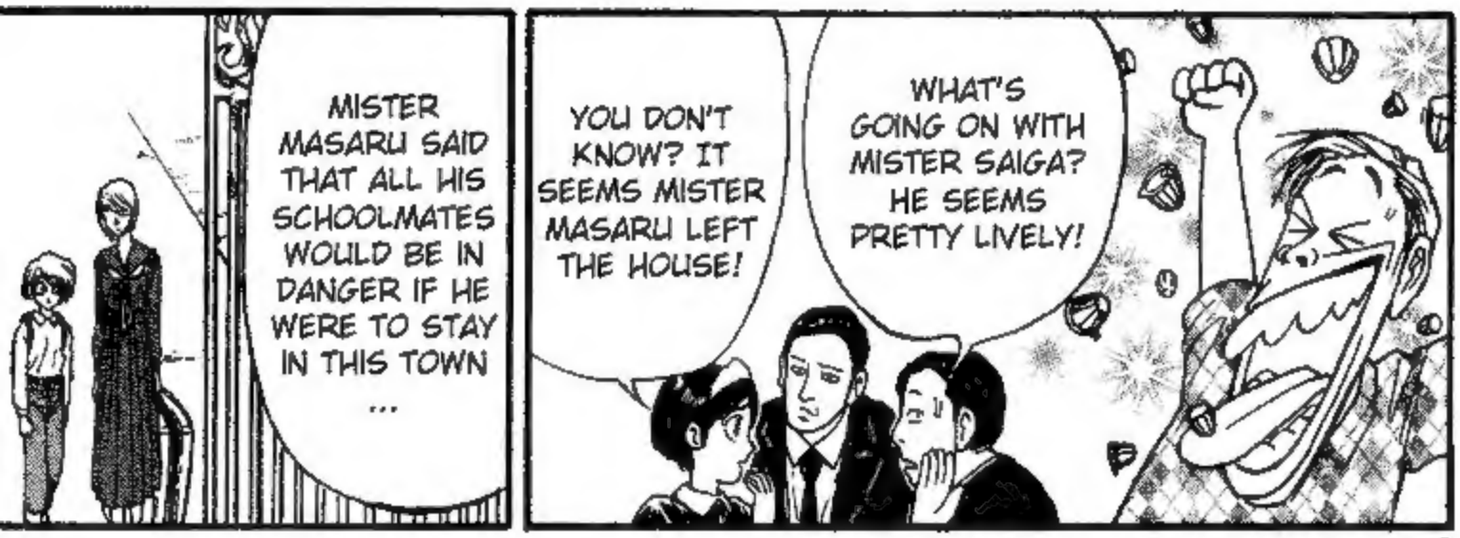
HUM... UNCLE ...

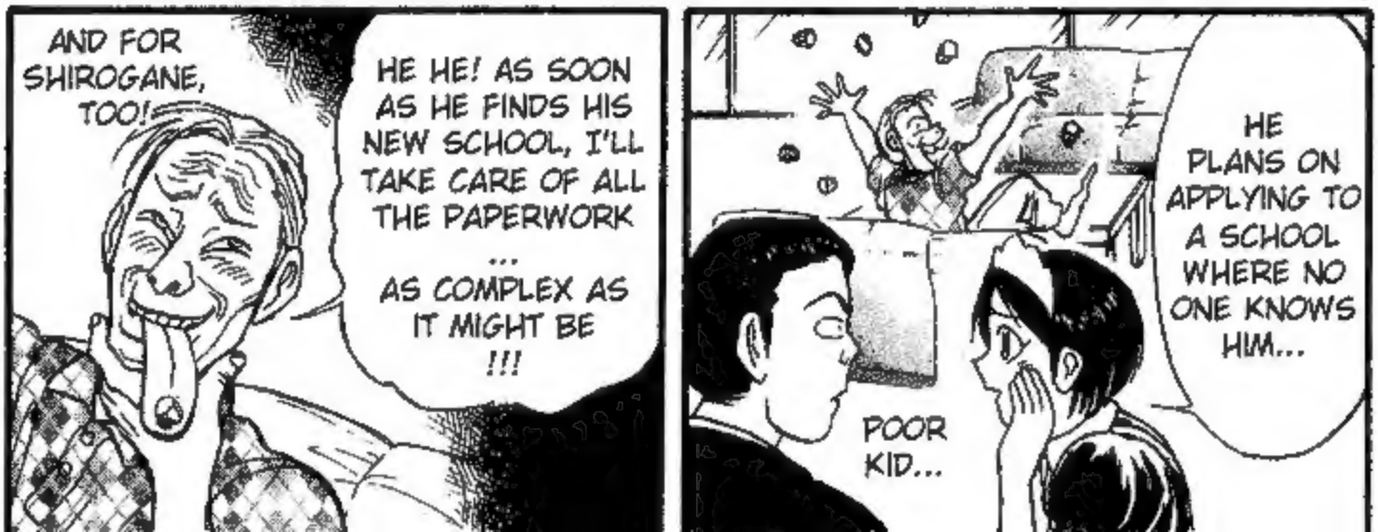
RIGHT NOW, I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO FIGHT THEM ANYMORE.

THEY'RE ALL DEAD JEALOUS!! THEY THINK MASARU STOLE HIS FATHER'S HERITAGE... AND SINCE I'M THE ONE WHO ADOPTED MASARU, THEY THINK I CAN DO WHATEVER I WANT WITH HIS MONEY!
YES.
HURRY UP! GET THE STAWBERRY JELLY!
BUT THAT'S WRONG!


HM?
I'LL BE LEAVING THIS HOUSE ...
HAAA!! HA HA!! MMMM-ASARU!

YAHOOOOO


MISTER MASARU SAID THAT ALL HIS SCHOOLMATES WOULD BE IN DANGER IF HE WERE TO STAY IN THIS TOWN ...
YOU DON'T KNOW? IT SEEMS MISTER MASARU LEFT THE HOUSE!
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH MISTER SAIGA? HE SEEMS PRETTY LIVELY!


AND FOR SHIROGANE, TOO!
HE HE! AS SOON AS HE FINDS HIS NEW SCHOOL, I'LL TAKE CARE OF ALL THE PAPERWORK ... AS COMPLEX AS IT MIGHT BE !!!
POOR KID...
HE PLANS ON APPLYING TO A SCHOOL WHERE NO ONE KNOWS HIM...

YOUR UNCLE LOOKED PRETTY HAPPY, MASTER ...
YES.

HA HA HA HA HA
AND AFTER THAT, HE'S GOING TO TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF ... HE HAS SO MUCH MONEY, THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE A PROBLEM!
HA HA HAA! AND THIS WAY, SADAYOSHI'S CHILDREN WON'T BE ABLE TO BLAME ME FOR ANYTHING!

YES, THAT'S TRUE ... I WONDER WHETHER ALL THE ADULTS ARE LIKE THIS OR NOT ...

HE KEPT SAYING "YOU'RE SO RICH MASARU" ...
THAT MAN'S OBSESSED WITH MONEY!

IT'S TRUE THAT WITH A LOT OF MONEY, YOU CAN DO A LOT OF THINGS, BUT...

WHOA! THERE'S A LOT OF PEOPLE!
YES.
TODAY, THERE'S A FAIR IN THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD.

DIDN'T YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE MEN WHO HELPED US?!
YES, BUT ...

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO GO NOW ?
TELL ME, SHIROGANE ...

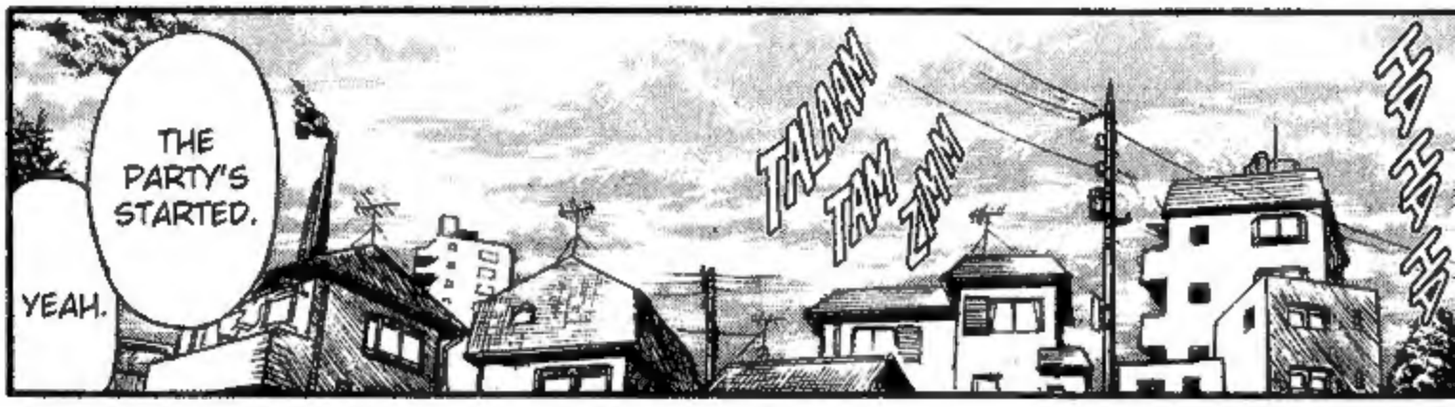
I DON'T WANT PEOPLE TO THINK YOU'RE A LIAR!
BUT...

SHIROGANE! YOU HAVE TO KEEP YOUR WORD! IT'S VERY IMPORTANT!

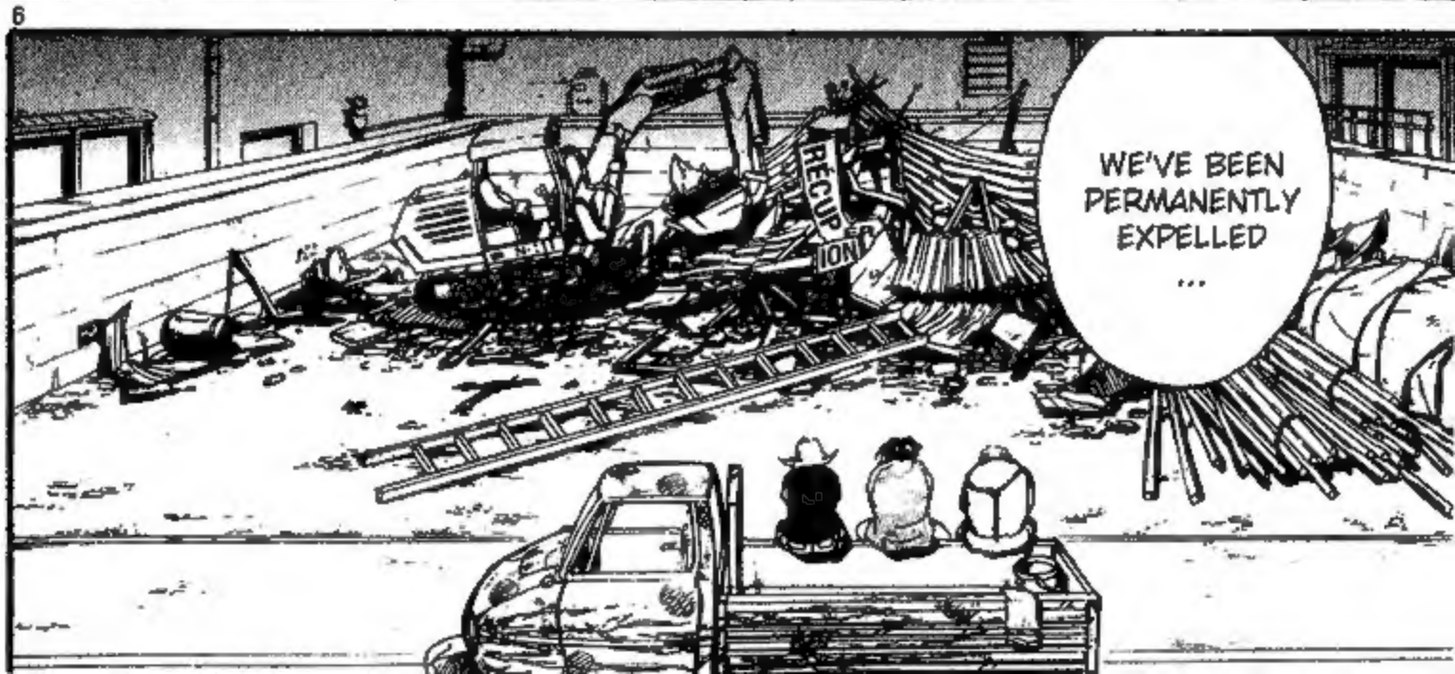
THEN YOU HAVE TO GO!
OUR SITUATION'S CHANGED. I CAN'T THINK ABOUT THAT ANYMORE ...
ALL THAT MATTERS IS BEING BY YOUR SIDE.

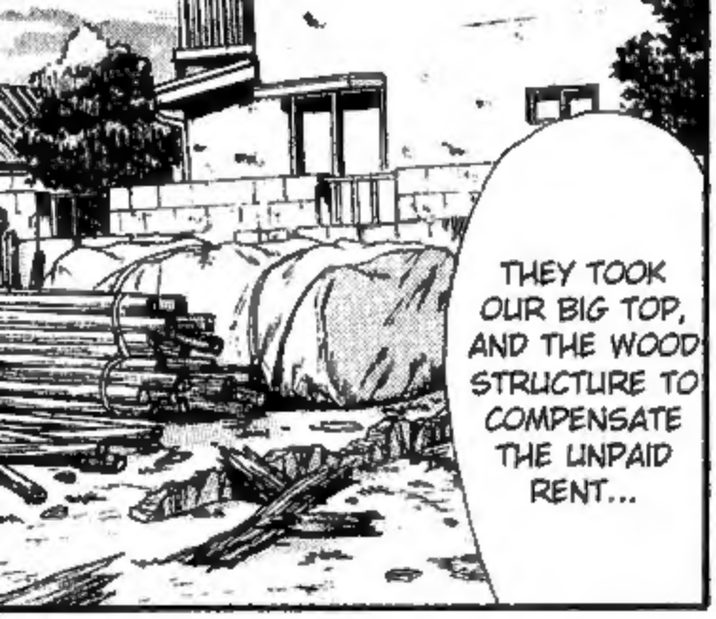
HURRY UP! LET'S GO SEE THEM IMMEDIATELY!
OKAY ...

THEY SAID THEY ARE CIRCUS ARTISTS ...


THE PARTY'S STARTED.
YEAH.
TALAH TAM ZAHN
HAHAH

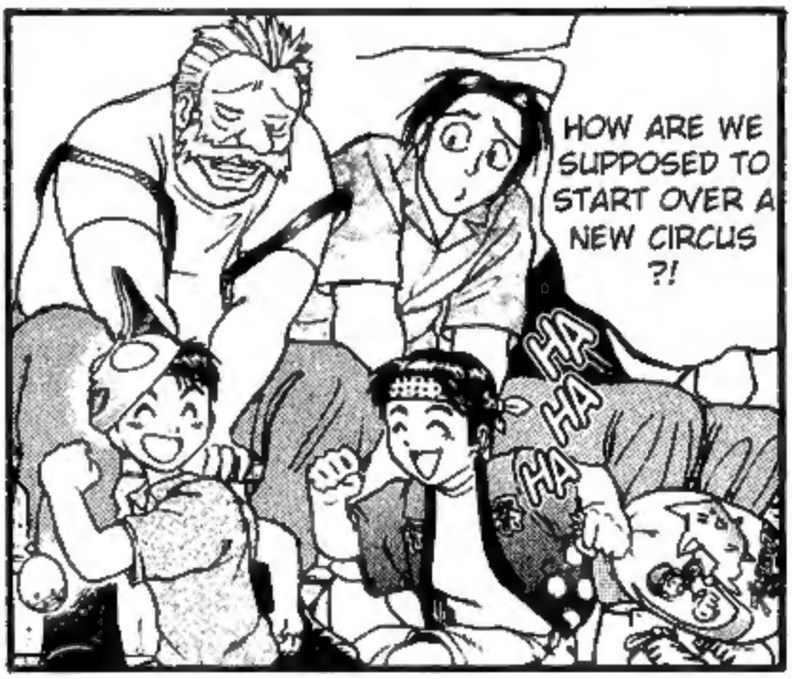
WHAT A PITY.
MISS SHIROGANE'S SUPPOSED TO COME TODAY ... WE WON'T BE ABLE TO WELCOME HER THE WAY SHE DESERVES.
BUT WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING.
PFIOU ...


RÉCUP ION
WE'VE BEEN PERMANENTLY EXPELLED ...


THEY TOOK OUR BIG TOP, AND THE WOOD STRUCTURE TO COMPENSATE THE UNPAID RENT...

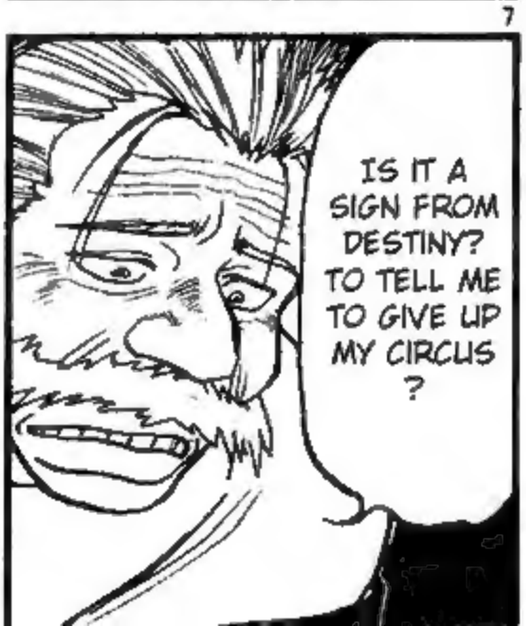
EVEN SO, THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO DEMOLISH EVERYTHING !!
THEY SHOULD BE ... WE HAVEN'T BEEN PAYING THE RENT FOR MORE THAN A YEAR NOW!
LOOKS LIKE THE OWNERS ARE REALLY MAD AT YOU, BOSS!

KIDS ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN ANIME AND VIDEO GAMES ...
THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT CIRCUSES!

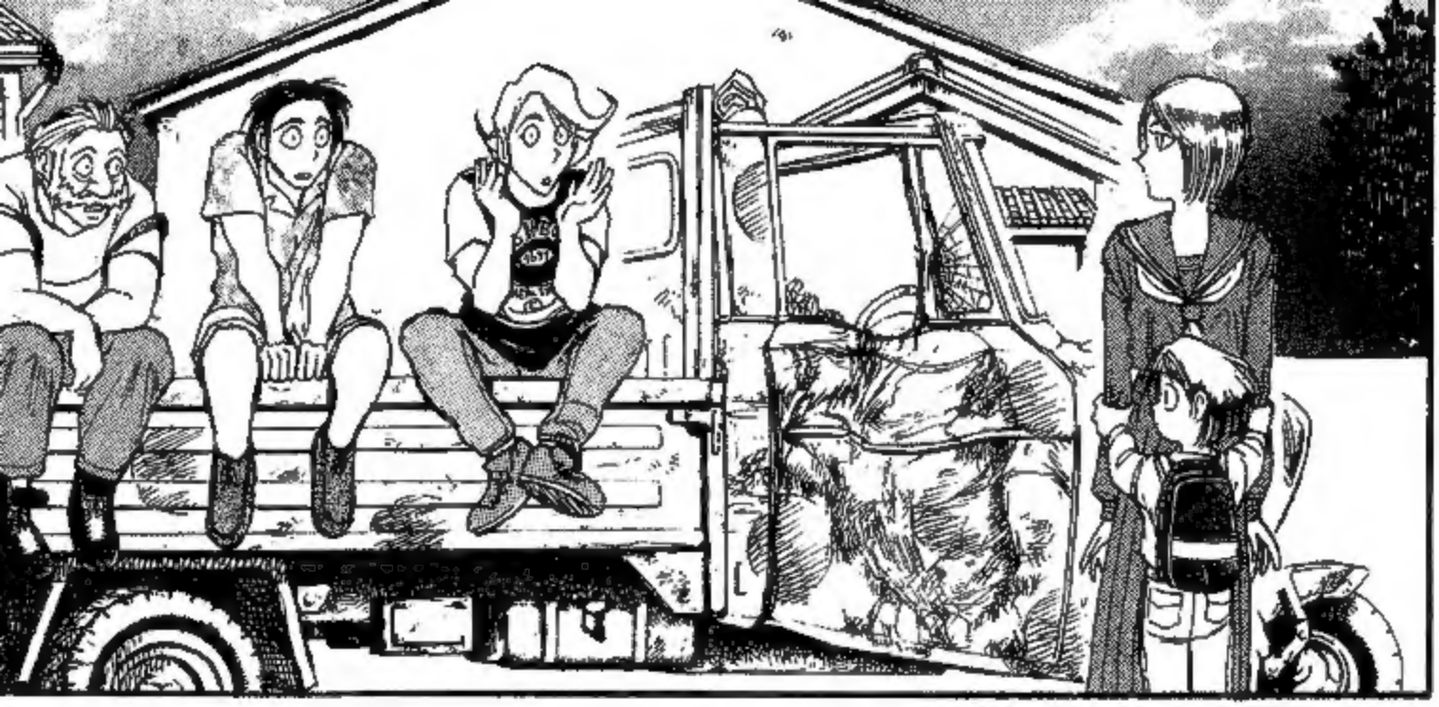

HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO START OVER A NEW CIRCUS ?!
HA HA HA

... IS REALLY AWESOME !
THE CIRCUS ...
CLAP CLAP

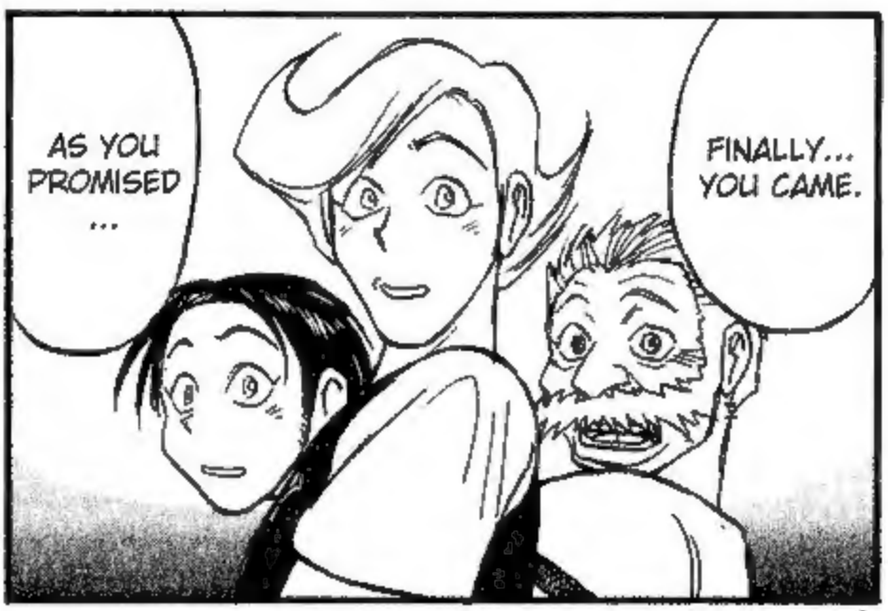
FLAP

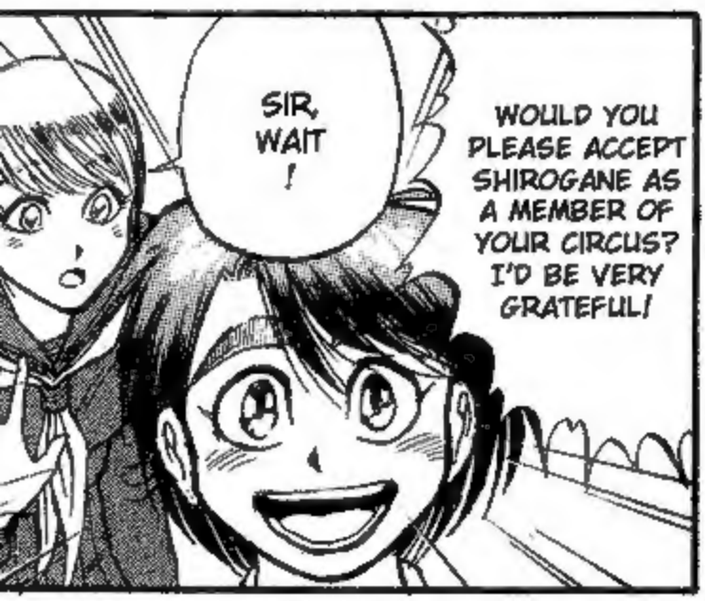

IS IT A SIGN FROM DESTINY? TO TELL ME TO GIVE UP MY CIRCUS ?

THAT'S WHY I WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY, TOO! DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S NORMAL?!
DON'T SAY THAT! YOU SPEND YOUR LIFE FIGHTING TO SAVE MINE!
SIR, YOU DON'T HAVE TO CARE ABOUT WHAT I LIKE AND WHAT I DON'T!
YOU USED TO BE IN A CIRCUS, SHIROGANE !
IT MEANS YOU LIKE IT, TOO!
TO FIND OUT WHAT WOULD MAKE HER LAUGH ...
TO GUESS WHAT SHIROGANE WOULD LIKE ...
THAT'S WHAT I'M ALWAYS TRYING TO DO ...
8
YOU HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NAKAMACHI CIRCUS!!
PLEASE! IF YOU REALLY LIKE THE CIRCUS, YOU MUST ACCEPT IT !
I DON'T WANT SHIROGANE TO SPEND ALL HER TIME PROTECTING ME...
I WANT HER TO TAKE CARE OF HER-SELF, TOO!
IF SHE LOOKS SO SAD, IT'S BECAUSE NARUMI DISAPPEARED FOREVER.
... TRY TO FORGET ABOUT NARUMI ... EVEN IF WE FEEL SAD ABOUT THAT ...
THEREFORE... WE HAVE TO...

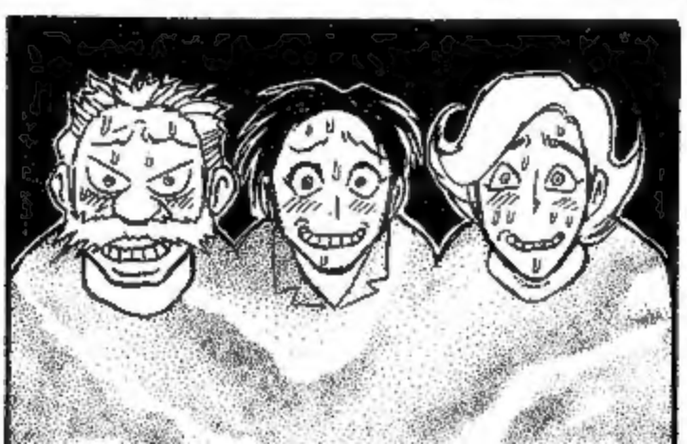


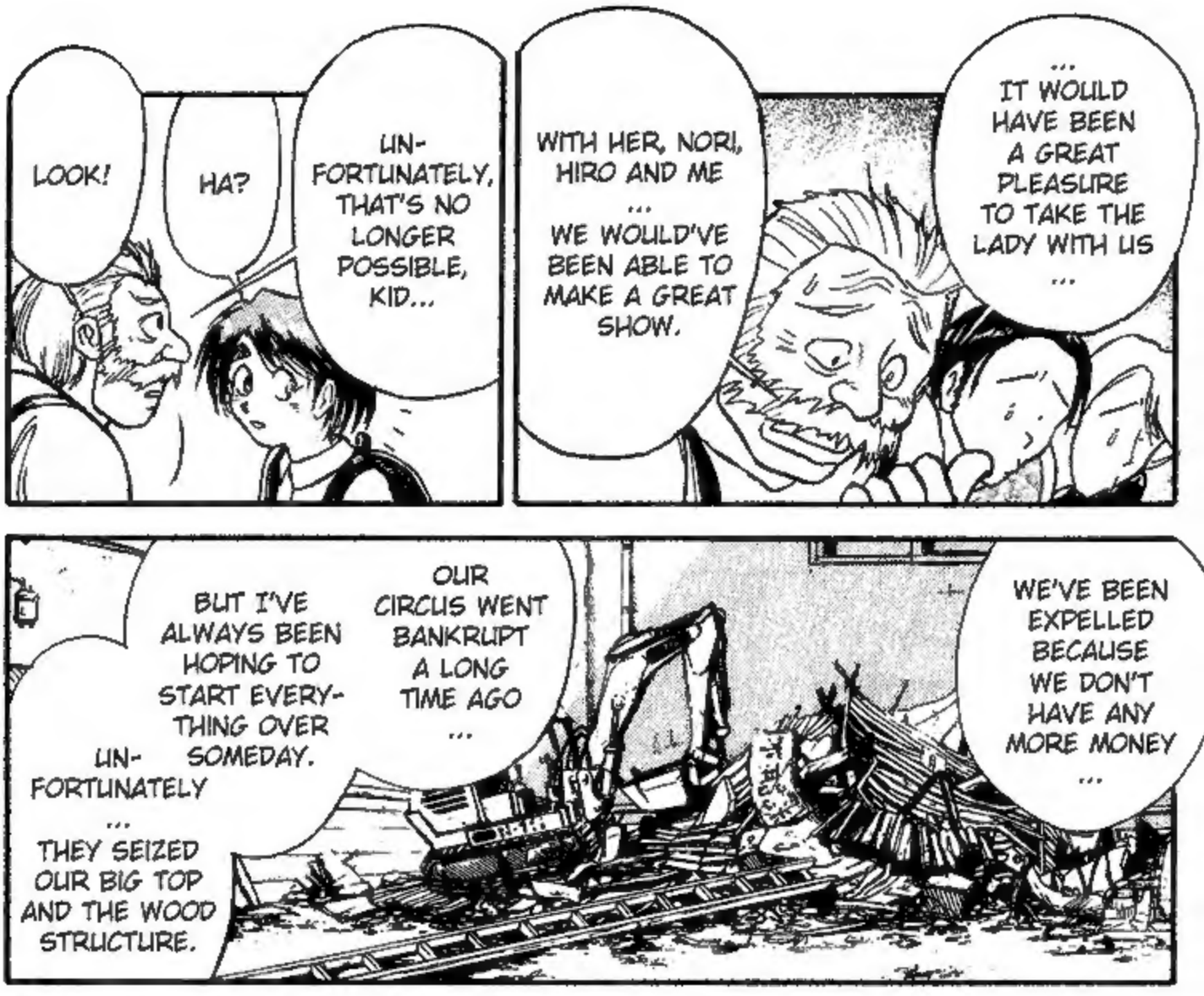
THANKS AGAIN FOR THE OTHER DAY.


AS YOU PROMISED ...
FINALLY... YOU CAME.


SIR, WAIT !
WOULD YOU PLEASE ACCEPT SHIROGANE AS A MEMBER OF YOUR CIRCUS? I'D BE VERY GRATEFUL!

HELLO! MY NAME'S MASARU!
IN
THESE THREE MEN ARE TRUE CIRCUS ARTISTS!




LOOK!
HA?
UN-FORTUNATELY, THAT'S NO LONGER POSSIBLE, KID...
WITH HER, NORI, HIRO AND ME ... WE WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE A GREAT SHOW.
... IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A GREAT PLEASURE TO TAKE THE LADY WITH US ...
OUR CIRCUS WENT BANKRUPT A LONG TIME AGO ...
BUT I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HOPING TO START EVERY-THING OVER SOMEDAY.
UN-FORTUNATELY ... THEY SEIZED OUR BIG TOP AND THE WOOD STRUCTURE.
WE'VE BEEN EXPELLED BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE ANY MORE MONEY ...

OH BOY
1657
REAL THING

MISTER NAKAMACHI, WHEN PEOPLE GO TO THE CIRCUS, THEY DON'T GO TO SEE THE BIG TOP ... DO THEY?

HM ...
DID I SAY SOME-THING STUPID ?

HEHE!!
I FEEL RELIEVED.
NO...
OF COURSE NOT.

SIR... I HAVEN'T ACCEPTED YET!
...SHIRO-GANE?

THE CIRCUS ISN'T JUST A HOBBY. OUR LIFE ISN'T AS SIMPLE AS YOU SEEM TO THINK... IT REQUIRES MANY SACRIFICES.
COME ON, LITTLE BOY, YOU'RE BOTHERING THE LADY.
IT'S IMPORTANT SAY YES!
I BEG YOU, YOU HAVE TO DO THAT!!

HN?!
COULD YOU SHOW ME WHAT YOU DO IN THE CIRCUS?
LOVE
EASY, BABY! SHE MUST'VE SEEN HOW SERIOUS I AM. SHE'LL LOVE THAT!
LOVE
JOB DONE! ACTING ATTENTIVE LIKE I DID, I'M SURE SHE'S GONNA THINK I'M VERY COOL!
HÉHÉ
12
KRRROM
HÉHÉ
HÉHÉ
EVEN MORE WHEN IT'S A CHILD'S REQUEST!
HA HA! WE CAN'T SAY NO!
DIOTS!
GOH

SAH
I USED TO BE CALLED APOLLO AMONG THE EQUILI-BRISTS !
YEARS OF PRACTICE HAVE PERFECTLY MODELED MY BODY!
SAH
...!
HOP!
HEHE!
HM ...

THEY'RE NOT LIKE THE OTHERS I KNOW.
THESE PEOPLE ARE DIFFERENT.

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

AND THEY'RE NOT SUCCEEDING THANKS TO MONEY ... BUT ONLY THANKS TO A LOT OF PATIENT PRACTICE!
THEY CAN DO AMAZING THINGS WITH THEIR BODY WITHOUT RELYING ON ANYTHING OR ANYBODY!

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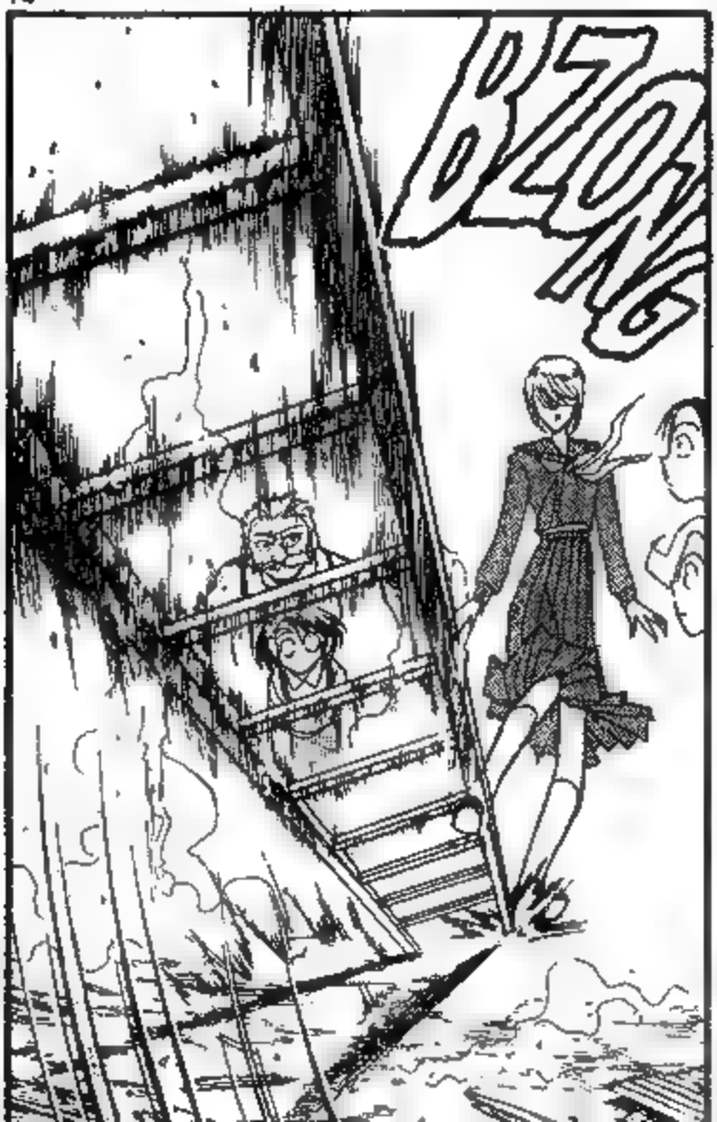

BZONG

YOUR TURN TO SHOW SOMETHING!
SHIRO-GANE ...

MY PLEASURE, SIR.

SSA
H
AW
TAW
TAW
TAW
OOHH

VVH

...I SEE SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
WOW! IT'S THE FIRST TIME
LOOK CAREFULLY! ONLY A CONFIRMED EQUILIBRIST CAN PERFORM SUCH A SHOW!

SPOF

OU AIS

I WAS RIGHT ... SHE'S AN AMAZING ARTIST !!

IT'S A STREET CIRCUS !
NO...
CLAP
WE DIDN'T KNOW THERE WERE TRAVELLING ACROBATS AROUND HERE!
GREAT !
HOURRA
CLAP CLAP CLAP
OUAIS
AMAZING !
CLAP

BRAVO!
YES... WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO SEE AT THE CIRCUS... ISN'T THE BIG TOP...

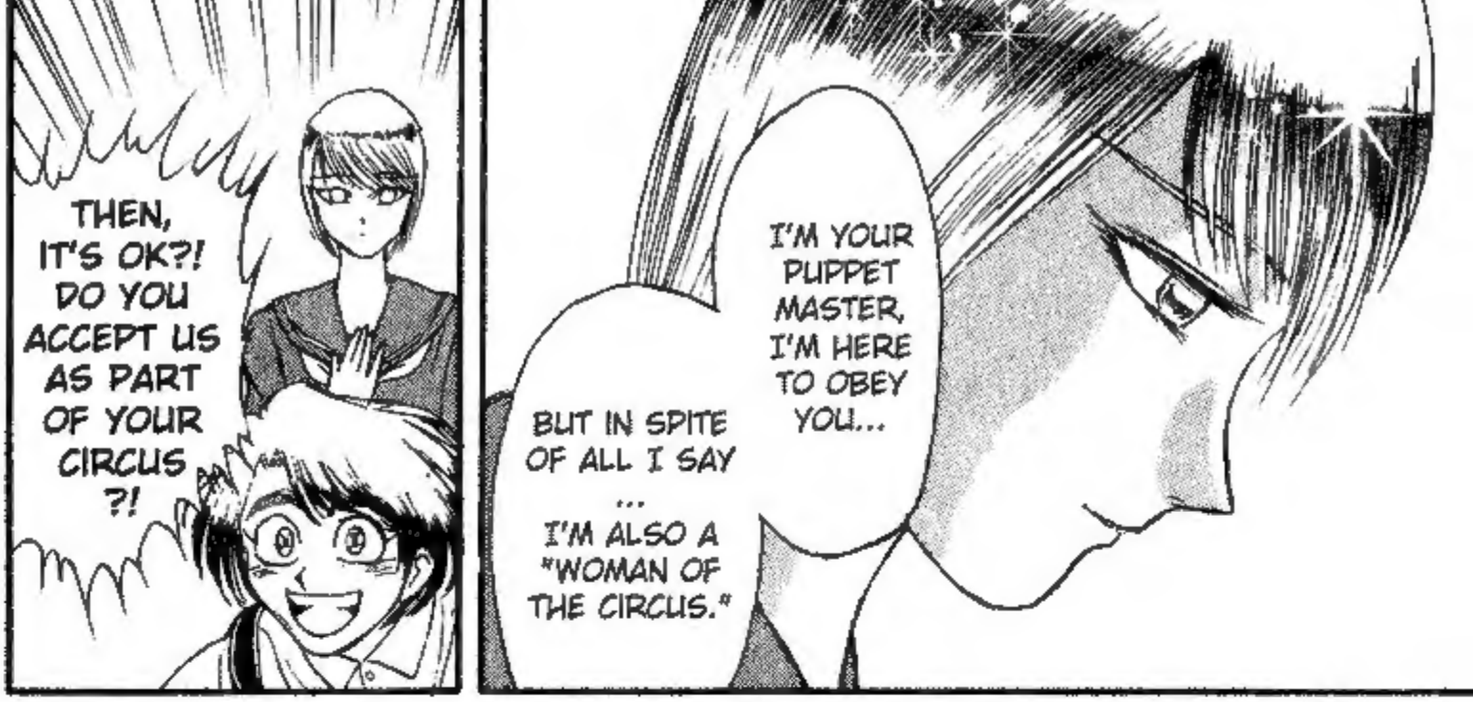
...A "STREET CIRCUS" ?

17

BEFORE EVERYTHING, MY MISSION'S TO PROTECT YOU, BUT ...
YES ?
SIR...

...I'LL BE PART OF THE NAKAMACHI CIRCUS.
... IF YOU INSIST ON ASKING ME TO DO WHAT I REALLY LIKE ...

HAHA !
WHAT A KID ...
HE KNOWS HIS THING.


THEN, IT'S OK?! DO YOU ACCEPT US AS PART OF YOUR CIRCUS ?!
I'M YOUR PUPPET MASTER, I'M HERE TO OBEY YOU...
BUT IN SPITE OF ALL I SAY ... I'M ALSO A "WOMAN OF THE CIRCUS."

AND I ONLY TAKE ARTISTS IN MY CIRCUS! WHAT CAN YOU DO, KID?!
DON'T WORRY !
WE DON'T EVEN HAVE A HOME! WE CAN'T TAKE CARE OF YOU!
OUR CIRCUS WENT BANKRUPT! WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING!

IT'S ALWAYS SAID IN THE CIRCUS THAT ...
FHH...
OK...
...
HMM

"WE NEVER HAVE ENOUGH VALIANT ARMS AROUND US"